

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 62DEFENSE ELECTRONICS
December 1982

CIA Boosts Intelligence Role Using High-Tech Electronics

With sophisticated technology and better operatives, the Central Intelligence Agency is seeking an expanded role in the U.S. intelligence community, as told by DE's "Intelligence Wire" columnist and former CIA Chief of Latin American Operations.

By David Atlee Phillips

The shape of the United States intelligence community in the next decade will be determined by developments in cloak-and-dagger technology that can enhance surveillance of hostile governments, particularly the Soviet Union, and that can contribute to the task of understanding the aspirations of Third World nations. Information from people—spies—will continue to be vital in some areas, but technological breakthroughs will be essential to assure an adequate American capability for meeting future challenges. Professional intelligence officers are aware of this exigency, which became clear to me when I encountered a Soviet intelligence officer, by chance, on a train.

Shortly after retiring from the CIA, I boarded the Metroliner from Washington, D.C., bound for New York. I sat next to a man in a gray suit. My fellow passenger was talkative, and I was intrigued by his accent; when I asked, he confirmed he was Russian, a diplomat at the Soviet Embassy in Washington. This admission made the odds about fifty-fifty that he was an intelligence operative, probably a member of the KGB. I was amused as the tenor of his questions supported my suspicions. He asked me first about my occupation.

"I was in the Foreign Service," I said, half-truthfully. "Now I'm retired."

I was evasive when the Russian persisted in asking me questions. When I told him I had never been to the Soviet Union he said I should take advantage of an inexpensive charter flight from Washington. This suggestion further mounted my belief that the Russian was a spy. I knew who I was dealing with because I had asked similar questions to a number of foreigners, including several Soviets, during my 25 years of CIA service, to determine whether a person might be useful as an intelligence source.

Just to be sure, I tested the Russian.

"My specialty in the Foreign Service," I lied, "was science and technology."

